

# Towards October 2024

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## Gathering Two

'The journey of the Catholic Church around the world in the renewal of our mission, centred on the work of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, continues apace. Please... make use of this moment for a reflection and renewal in the mission entrusted to us by our Blessed Lord.'

(Cardinal Vincent Nichols)

## Synod 2021-2024



## Welcome to the Word

Begin with the Sign of the Cross

Then read:

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

(1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 7)

Pause for reflection

Pray the Adsumus Prayer together:

### Adsumus Prayer

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

## Formation

When Pope Francis writes about Evangelization, he is clear that we all need formation at every stage of life. The Synod was equally clear that it is the responsibility of each Catholic to make sure they receive adequate formation. "Every baptized person," the Synthesis says, "is called to take care of their own formation as a response to the gifts of the Lord, making use of the talents they have received in order that they bear fruit and put them at the service of all ... it is decisive for mission." (14a)

It listed a great number of possibilities: "The areas in which the formation of the People of God takes places are many. In addition to



theological formation, the Assembly requested training in specific skills: the exercise of co-responsibility, listening, and discernment; conducting ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, service to the poorest and care for our common home; engagement as "digital missionaries", facilitation of discernment processes, Conversation in the Spirit, consensus building and conflict resolution." (14e)

But formation is not just about skills: it is about conversion, about turning back to Christ in order to proclaim his merciful love. This is captured in the statement: "At the heart of Christian formation is a deepening of the kerygma, that is, the encounter with Jesus Christ that offers us the gift of a new life. Catechumenal logic reminds us that we are all sinners called to holiness. This is why we engage in a journey towards personal conversion that the Sacrament of Reconciliation brings to fulfilment. This is also why we nourish the desire for holiness, supported by a large number of witnesses." (14d)

The Synthesis even describes a Synodal approach to formation. By this it means we need to be formed not just as individuals but as a body. "Formation for a synodal Church needs to be undertaken synodally: the entire People of God being formed together as they journey together ... Formation in a synodal key is meant to enable the People of God to live out their baptismal vocation fully, in the family, in the workplace, in ecclesial, social, and intellectual spheres." (14f) In short, we need to be formed better to realize our mission; indeed, this is the whole purpose of formation – "to enable each person to participate actively in the Church's mission according to his or her own charisms and vocation." (14f)

*Take a moment now to reflect on these words of the Synthesis Report from the October 2023 Synod*

## Conversation in the Spirit

In a group of 5 or 6, choose a facilitator and a scribe for recording what is shared. Maybe use a stone or other 'listening piece' on each table. Be still for 3 minutes, then walk through the process step by step:



1. One person will volunteer to begin speaking
2. This first speaker should take the stone and share their thoughts on the first question
3. They should speak for no more than 3 minutes
4. The facilitator will give notice once they are approaching 3 minutes then ask them to end
5. The first speaker then passes the stone to the person on their left, who does the same
6. Once everybody has spoken, we sit still for 3 minutes' silent reflection
7. Then we do the same for the second question
8. This should take an hour or so in total.

## The Conversation

At Gathering One, through Conversation in the Spirit, we discussed:

**Q.1:** How do we witness as a Parish and proclaim our faith to:

- ▷ those who have never heard of Christ;
- ▷ those who have ceased walking with Christ;
- ▷ those with whom we worship Christ (those who go to church)?

**Q.2:** How should we organise ourselves as a Parish to do this more effectively?

The Facilitator may care briefly to recall what was captured from Gathering One.

Now the questions for today:

**Q.3:** What concrete steps/formation opportunities would help us begin to witness and proclaim our faith more effectively?

**Q.4:** What structures may need to change? How might we need to develop the way we are organised currently?

Make time for each group to give their feedback.

**Closing Prayer** – pray together the Our Father.

